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UNTIL 3:00 a.m. EDT July 25, 2007

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**Child Well-Being in Oklahoma at a Glance**  
***2007 KIDS COUNT Oklahoma Fact Sheet***

Oklahoma ranks 42<sup>nd</sup> overall in the nation in a new state-by-state study on the well-being of America's children. The 2007 *KIDS COUNT Data Book* reveals that Oklahoma improved on four of the 10 measures reflecting child well-being and experienced setbacks on six measures since 2000. The 2007 Essay discusses the need for all children in foster care to develop strong, lasting family connections. The Essay also sets an ambitious national goal to preserve, strengthen, rebuild, or find permanent families for every American child who is at risk of not having one.

**Over 15,000 Oklahoma children are in need of a permanent family connection.**

In 2004, 15,186 children under age 18 in Oklahoma lived in foster care at some point during the year, a rate of 18 per 1,000 children. That year, 315 children in the state aged out of the system without having a permanent family. Nationwide, 10 children per 1,000 under age 18 lived in foster care with 22,718 leaving the system at age 18 without a stable family environment.

**A higher percentage of Oklahoma teens are staying in school.**

The percentage of teens ages 16-19 who drop out of high school improved by 29 percent between 2000 and 2005, down from 14 percent to 10 percent statewide. This is the greatest improvement of the 10 indicators tracked annually. Despite this improvement, the state lags behind the national trend, which improved 36 percent over the same period of time, placing Oklahoma 47<sup>th</sup> in the country for its high school dropout rate.

**Percentage of children in poverty worsens.**

In 2005, 23 percent of the state's total child population lived in poverty, a 21 percent increase from 2000, when the rate was 19 percent. During those same years, the national child poverty rate increased by 12 percent from 17 percent in 2000 to 19 percent in 2005.

**Teen death rate increases.**

Oklahoma's rate increased by 14 percent, from 77 deaths per 100,000 in 2000 to 88 deaths per 100,000 in 2004. The national teen death rate dropped marginally from 67 deaths per 100,000 teens aged 15-19 in 2000 to 66 deaths per 100,000 over the same period of time.